

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINR, PINS, YO
SUBJECT: FORMER YUGOSLAV POLITICAL LEADERS ALLEGEDLY STILL
ALIVE AND VERY DISCREETLY ACTIVE

1. A ZAGREB DOCTOR WITH AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN POLITICS DE-
SCRIBED YUGOSLAVIA AS IN EFFECT CARRYING WATER ON BOTH SHOULDERS --
THE WEST ON THE ONE AND THE EAST ON THE OTHER -- AND FOR WHOM THE
BELGRADE CONFERENCE REPRESENTS A PARTICULARLY TRYING AND SENS-
ITIVE EVENT.

THE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC REALITIES FOR YUGOSLAVIA
IS, AS HE EXPLAINED, THAT THE YUGOSLAV LEADERSHIP MUST STRIVE
TO ACHIEVE SOME BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EAST AND
THE WEST. A COMPLICATING FEATURE IS THAT YUGOSLAVIA IS AN AUTO-
CRATIC STATE IN WHICH, HOWEVER, YUGOSLAV CITIZENS PRIZE THE FACT
THAT THEY GENERALLY ENJOY THE RIGHT TO TRAVEL ABROAD FREELY.

2. THE ZAGREB DOCTOR TOLD THE CONSUL GENERAL THAT FORMER POLI-
TICAL LEADERS WHO WERE EXPelled OR RESIGNED FROM THEIR POSITIONS
IN 1971-72, CONTINUE TO BE ACTIVELY INTERESTED IN THE LOCAL
POLITICAL SCENE, MAINTAIN POLITICAL CONTACTS, BUT VERY DISCREETLY
AND OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW. THEY DO NOT DARE SHOW THEMSELVES POLI-
TICALLY WHILE TITO IS ALIVE. FOR EXAMPLE, HE CLAIMED THAT KOCA

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POPOVIC, A FORMER MEMBER OF THE SFRY PRESIDENCY, IS A POPULAR
FIGURE, ACTIVE, AND LIKELY TO PLAY AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN THE
POST-TITO PERIOD. ALSO, THAT PEOPLE LIKE MARKO NIKEZIC, FORMER
PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS OF SERBIA; MIKO TRIPOLI,
FORMER MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BUREAU OF THE LCY; AND SAVKA
DABCEVIC-KUCAR, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE LEAGUE OF COMMUNISTS
OF CROATIA; AS WELL AS OTHERS ELSEWHERE IN YUGOSLAVIA, HAVE IN

THE GOAL OF FURTHER DEMOCRATIZING YUGOSLAVIA AND ARE BIDING THEIR TIME. HE SAID THESE LEADERS ARE NOT SEPARATISTS; THEY ARE YUGOSLAVS WHO FAVOR MORE DEMOCRACY AND GREATER FREEDOMS WITHIN THE COUNTRY. WHILE THEY SEEK NO CONTACT WITH WESTERN OFFICIALS, HE SAID THAT USG POLICY STATEMENTS EMPHASIZING HUMAN RIGHTS AND AFFIRMING THE US AS STANDARD BEARER FOR DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES STRENGTHEN THEIR POSITIONS IN YUGOSLAVIA.

3. COMMENT: IN EFFECT THIS YUGOSLAV IS URGING THE US TO STAY THE COURSE AND TO CONTINUE TO ARTICULATE ITS PRESENT POLICIES. HE IS SAYING THAT IT IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF THOSE SEEKING TO DEMOCRATIZE YUGOSLAVIA TO HAVE DIRECT CONTACT WITH AMERICAN OFFICIALS, NOR IS IT AT PRESENT APPROPRIATE FOR AMERICAN OFFICIALS TO HAVE CONTACT WITH THEM IN TODAY'S YUGOSLAVIA. WE WOULD AGREE.

4. EMBASSY COMMENT: WHILE NONE OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS LISTED HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY AND WE DO NOT PLAN TO SEEK THEM OUT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT IS APPROPRIATE OR NECESSARY TO FORSWEAR CONTACTS WITH "THOSE SEEKING TO DEMOCRATIZE YUGOSLAVIA."

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